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ABSTRACT

This document describes the philosophy and courses of the curricular and co-curricular speech-debate-theatre program at Henry Sibley Senior High School in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. The document begins with a brief introduction and background on the school and community, including socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic information, and continues with a description of the language arts program. After itemizing the general objectives of the language arts program, the speech department, and the drama department, the courses available to the students are listed and described. Also included is a list of supplementary texts, a brief reference to library and audio-visual resources, a discussion of the annual working budget, and a prospectus on the future of the speech-theatre department. (RB)

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A Description of the Curricular and Co-Curricular Speech - Debate - Theatre Program Henry Sibley Senior High Mendota Heights, Minnesota

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INTRO & BACKGROUND

Independent School District #197, where Henry Sibley Senior High School is located, serves the communities of West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Lilydale, Sunfish Lake, and parts of Egan Township and Inver Grove Heights. West St. Paul comprises about one-third of the district geographically and has about two-thirds of the total district population. The second largest community is Mendota Heights. Both of these communities are fairly heterogeneous in terms of socio-economic level but are almost totally Caucasian with varying backgrounds, such as Norwegian, Swedish, Irish, etc. There are approximately one hundred blacks living in the district and a rising population of people of Jewish extraction. There is a small representation of Chinese-Americans and Mexican-Americans. Egan Township, Inver Grove Heights and Mendota are very similar to the population of West St. Paul and Mendota Heights. The Village of Lilydale, is a relatively low socio-economic community which is in distinct contrast to the exclusive residential area that makes up Sunfish Lake.

The community has a broad based social-economic basis with a full range of class structures and salaries. The preponderance of the community probably falls in the middle-middle to upper-middle classes.

Generally speaking, this is a growing community. People are moving in, thus indicating a liking for the area. Most people seem to think that this is a pleasant place to live. Some younger people, as in any suburban community, tend to move into the center of the city for excitement or because living is less expensive.

The school community is 27 square miles in area and has a population of 30,000.

Sixty-five to seventy per cent of the parents send their children to public schools: thus, seventy-eight per cent of the children in the community attend public schools.

At Henry Sibley High School there are two large cultural-level groups. One group consists of the "recently arrived" suburban immigrants who have moved into the area within the last ten or fifteen years. Because of new housing developments, this group continues to grow in numbers. The other large cultural-level group consists of children from the "older" West Side residents whose parents, friends, and relatives have lived in the community for many years. Many of the parents attended St. Paul Humboldt and other early West Side schools before the present District #197 was established. School District #197 is an independent district and is not a part of the St. Paul School System.

The "suburban group" of students have parents who are anxious to have their children excel in school and to be active in extra-curricular activities. In most instances, these students are planning to attend college or some type of professional school. On the other hand, many from the "West Side" group appear to regard school with little enthusiasm and committment. At times, there seems to be open hostility resulting from the conflicting philosophies. However, as a result of establishing a more comprehensive Industrial Arts Department and by the addition of effective on-the-job and work experience programs, some of this hostility has dimished.

INTRO & BACKGROUND(cont'd)

There are no language barriers requiring special school programs. There are, however, some cultural barriers for some students which have led to the creation of special remedial classes in Language Arts and in history. These classes are provided at Grades 10 and 11.

Follow-up studies and surveys indicate that between 36% (1961) and 54% (1964) of Sibley students attend a four-year college after high school graduation. The most recent figure (class of 1969) indicates that 38% were attending four-year colleges. The average for the fourteen years studied was approximately 42%.

Between 1955-1959, when complete follow-up studies were made five to seven years after graduation, the percentage of each class obtaining college degrees ranged from 12% in 1957 to 21% in 1958. The most recent (1959) indicated 18% of those still in college could cause these figures to range between 20% (1957) and 28% (1958). However, many of those who were still in college had already received a baccalaureate degree and were working on advanced degrees.

The preceding has been a brief, over-all description of the school and community of Independent School District #197. Now, let us look, specifically, at the Language Arts Department.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR SPEECH-DEBATE-THEATRE

At Henry Sibley Senior High School, the Speech-Theatre Department is a part of the Language Arts Department. Thus, the philosophy of these particular disciplines is reflected in a general way in the department philosophy. The Language Arts Department believes that an educated person must acquire the following: he must acquire correctness in the use of his language, he must acquire the habit of reflection on the body of knowledge he encounters, he must strive for constant intellectual growth and develop the ability to translate the thought into act. The teachers of Henry Sibley Senior High School have as their primary objective the striking of an effective balance between the arts and crafts of language, reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The Language Arts Program should be rich in the kinds of activities which will help students attain these ends.

A. To express ideas clearly and accurately.
B. To read critically and intelligently.
C. To participate effectively in group discussion.
D. To use school and community libraries for reference work and for pleasure reading.
E. To find personal enjoyment and satisfaction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
F. To find lifetime enjoyment and satisfaction in reading, writing, speaking and listening experiences.
G. To select and use intelligently such mass modes of communication as the newspaper, magazine, radio, motion picture, and television.

Specifically, department objectives are:

A. General Objectives for the Student- Speech

1. To develop the ability to speak competently, confidently, and ethically in a democratic society.
2. To understand the nature of speech as a force in self-expression, communication, and social control.
3. To develop favorable attitudes toward the potential and power of speech.
4. To develop sound standards as a framework of reference within which the student can criticize constructively his own speaking and the speaking of others.
5. To learn expressive emotional and intellectual response to ideas and images.
6. To gain insight into individual speaking abilities and needs, to develop a desire for improvement, and to succeed in using acceptable speech habits.

B. Specific Objectives for the Student - Speech

1. To employ critical analysis and creative thinking in speaking and listening.
2. To apply reasonable and responsible judgment to what is said and how it is said.
3. To become proficient in the use of thought, language, voice, and action.
4. To develop skill in analyzing the speaker, audience, subject, occasion, and communicative process.
5. To acquire knowledge about, and practice in, the methods and techniques used in the forms of discourse: conversing, speech making, reading aloud, discussing, and parlimentary procedure.
6. To practice the techniques of listening attentively, objectively, and critically to the ideas of others.
7. To develop controlled, skillful, expressive, and meaningful use of the body in speaking.
8. To learn the nature and importance of voice and to practice its effective use in communication.
9. To study and practice effective use of appropriate language in oral communication.
10. To understand the close interrelationship of the processes of learning and speaking.
11. To learn how to collect, evaluate, and utilize evidence and reasoning in discussion and formal speaking.
12. To understand and practice the process of reflective thinking.
13. To learn how to choose subjects for speeches as well as for other forms of oral communication.
14. To evaluate objectively one's own performance and that of others.

We are aware that we are teaching individual human relations, values, ideals, and democracy. We do this indirectly and hopefully develop in our students the precision and the discrimination they need in other to cope with the complexities of knowledge. It is our goal to train students to articulate what they sense, to interpret what they investigate, to analyze facts, and to synthesize ideas. Language Arts is required in all the three years of high school. Each student must complete six semesters of Language Arts courses. The ability to read, write, speak, and listen well are basic skills needed in every school subject as well as in the various vocations. Language Arts courses give students the opportunity to explore these basic areas. However, it is the philosophy of the department that students be offered a variety of experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. To have these experiences, students are required to have one course in speech-theatre-debate, two in literature, and one in writing. In speech-theatre-debate, students may select from the following semester courses: Fundamentals of Speech, Persuasion and Argumentation, Public Address, Advanced Debate, and Acting and Stagecraft I. Acting and Stagecraft II is also offered but only for enrichment credit. It does not fulfill a Language Arts requirement.

Descriptions of these courses are as follows:

DESCRIPTIONS OF COURSES (cont'd)

A. Fundamentals of Speech - (Grades 10 - 12)

This course is designed to meet the basic speaking needs of students from grades 10 - 12. In addition to the class requirements, the students must participate in one or more co-curricular speech festivals.

B. Persuasion and Argumentation - (Grades 10 - 12)

This course will involve three different aspects designed to take the student from theory into actual practice. It will give the student a beginning background of argumentation. An examination of the modes of proof from a historical as well as a contemporary view will be stressed. The course will secondly be practical in that the course will deal with current problems and ideas. It will provide the student the opportunity to organize, attack, and defend his own ideas. It will promote logical reasoning, critical thinking, and effective speaking. Finally the student will have the opportunity to participate in Sibley's co-curricular speech and debate program either through observation or through active participation. The student will be required to attend at least two invitational debate tournaments either as an observer or as a participating member. Argumentation and Persuasion is the prerequisite for the debate class. The student must secure the permission of the instructor to continue the debate sequence.

C. Public Address

This course will attempt to examine in detail the various aspects of platform speech in a free society. Mass persuasion, propaganda, political speaking and speech criticism will be stressed. The course will center on two levels. (1) An examination of effective historic and contemporary public address. (2) Practice of various forms of mass persuasive techniques.

The student will be expected to attend various public functions listening, recording, and evaluating the various speakers heard.

D. Debate

Prerequisite: Argumentation and Persuasion. The student must secure the permission of the instructor to continue the Debate sequence.

Debate will continue to stress the material covered in the semester course of Argumentation and Persuasion with the emphasis now placed on mastery and application of the skills.

DESCRIPTIONS OF COURSES(cont'd)

E. Acting and Stagecraft I

This course will be divided into two nine-week units. The first nine weeks will be devoted to the art of communication through acting. Students will study simple improvisations, stage movement, and acting techniques. The second nine weeks will draw together all elements of stage communications including: scene design, technical theatre, and the art of stage craft.

F. Acting and Stagecraft II

(Semester) - (Grades 11, 12) - (1/2 enrichment credit)

Prerequisite: Acting and Stagecraft I

The class will be open to juniors and seniors who are honestly interested in the theatre arts. Students will produce, act, stage and costume at least one play a quarter, to be presented to various audiences. This course cannot be used to fulfill the Language Arts (speech) requirement for high school graduation.

Approximately sixteen hundred students are attending Henry Sibley Senior High School during 1972-73 with the sophomore class being the largest at 550; followed by 532 juniors, and 490 seniors. Speech-debate-theatre classes average 25 to 30 students per class.

No basic texts are used in any of the classes. Rather, teachers use supplementary sets of texts, e.g.:

The New American Speech: Hedde : Bregance
Speaking by Doing -
The Debater's Guide - Murphy & Ericson
Modern Debate - Kruger
Persuasion - Brombeck & Howell

Teachers also use library and personal resources and audio-visuals.

There is an excellent Audio-Visual Department in the school, with a co-operative, creative co-ordinator. Available to each teacher in the Speech Department is a Cassette taperecorder, a regular taperecorder, and a phonograph. Special arrangements can be made for the use of the video-taperecorder and television monitors.

Within the auditorium-complex are located the three rooms for speech-debate-theatre instruction. There are three two-way mirrored recording rooms, production room and office for television, and individual teacher's offices. The auditorium has complete facilities for dramatic and musical productions and seats approximately 600 on the main floor and 250 in the balcony. Adjacent dressing rooms, construction area and storage rooms are provided for the best utilization for this facility.

In planning speech curriculum at Henry Sibley Senior High School, we correlate curricular with co-curricular speech activities. By introducing units in interpretation, drama, and forensics, the teacher is able to prepare the students in classroom for participation in intra-school activities, inter-school festivals and contests, and community programs.

Henry Sibley Senior High School has an active co-curricular speech-debate program. Debaters participate in Minnesota State High School League competition, National Forensic League competition, and high school and college invitationals. Speech students participate in Minnesota State High School League competition and speech festivals sponsored by suburban high schools. Students in the Acting and Stagecraft II class plan, direct, and present their own series of children's plays. These plays then tour the district grade schools and children's homes and hospitals.

This past summer a summer theatre workshop was developed in conjunction with the summer school program. The workshop is an innovation in high school theatre for this area. The motivating force for the summer theatre program was to provide more theatrical experiences for students who might become theatre majors or, to give students who have not had the opportunity to participate in theatre during the academic school year, a chance to become involved in a new creative endeavor. By doing summer theatre, students involved themselves in several areas of theatre production--such as set construction, painting, costuming, production, and acting. This gave students the opportunity to learn the total aspect of how a play is produced.

The approximate annual working budget for the Speech-Theatre-Department is difficult to ascertain because it is correlated with the total Language Arts Department budget. However, for co-curricular activities in speech and debate the budget is $1500.00. The theatre program is self-supporting. For several years $300.00 was given to the theatre program from the sale of activity tickets. However, this practice has been discontinued. The extra increment salaries are based on a percentage of the base salary.

The extra increment schedule for 1972-73 is:

Head Debate:	$1208.00
Major Plays:(Fall,Spring,each)	$ 755.00
One Act Play:	$ 378.00
Head Forensics:	$ 906.00
Ass't Forensics:	$ 528.00
Technical Director-Plays	$ 302.00

There are three members of the Speech Department. Two members have their Master's Degree - one in theatre and one in speech education. The third member has done advanced study in his major area - Debate and public address. All three members are actively involved in professional speech organizations.

Plans for the next two years are to give more importance to the concept of inter- intra personal communication. This concept will aid in building and developing the personal aspect of communication so necessary in our society today.

In summary, there are, of course, many different ways of organizing a school's curricular and co-curricular speech program. The organization depends upon the individual teacher's philosophy of speech education. It is our philosophy at Henry Sibley Senior High School that speech must be taught: 1. to develop an honest desire to communicate; 2. to develop effective habits of speaking; 3. to learn to select and organize worthwhile materials for speech; and 4. to learn to appreciate life and people. It is our goal to accomplish this philosophy by developing a well-integrated curricular and co-curricular speech program.